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Programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009

Groups of countries in special situations: Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries

Implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.2/63/L.57

Statement submitted by the Secretary-General in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly

I. Requests contained in the draft resolution

1. Under the terms of operative paragraphs 4, 5, 6, 7 and 10 of draft resolution A/C.2/63/L.57, the General Assembly would:

(a) Decide to convene, as called for in paragraph 114 of the Brussels Programme of Action, the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries at a high level in the year 2011 for the duration of not more than five working days, the mandate of the Conference being the following:

(i) To undertake a comprehensive appraisal of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Decade 2001-2010 by the least developed countries and their development partners, share best practices and lessons learned, and identify obstacles and constraints encountered as well as actions and initiatives needed to overcome them;

(ii) To identify effective international and domestic policies in the light of the outcome of the appraisal as well as new and emerging challenges and opportunities and the means to address them;

(iii) To reaffirm the global commitment to addressing the special needs of the least developed countries made at the major United Nations conferences and summits, including the Millennium Summit and the 2005 World Summit, in

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particular the needs related to sustainable development in its economic, social and environmental dimensions and to support the least developed countries in eradicating poverty and integrating beneficially into the global economy;

(iv) To mobilize additional international support measures and action in favour of the least developed countries and, in that regard, formulate and adopt the framework for a renewed partnership between the least developed countries and their development partners;

(b) Decide to convene an intergovernmental preparatory committee, which would hold no more than two meetings towards the end of 2010 and/or in early 2011;

(c) Decide that the meetings of the preparatory committee would be preceded by two regional-level preparatory meetings, one in collaboration with the Economic Commission for Africa and the other in collaboration with the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, in the context of the regular annual sessions of each Commission, with those regional-level meetings to be supported by broad-based and inclusive country-level preparations;

(d) Stress that the Conference and the preparatory activities should be carried out so as to remain within the budget level proposed by the Secretary-General for the biennium 2010-2011 and should be organized in the most effective and efficient manner possible;

(e) Decide that the United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States would be the focal point for the preparations of the Conference, in accordance with the mandates given in General Assembly resolution 56/227, to ensure that those preparations are carried out effectively, and to mobilize and coordinate the active involvement of United Nations system organizations.

II. Relationship of the requests to the programme of work for the bienniums 2008-2009 and 2010-2011

2. The activities referred to above relate to programme 8, Least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, of the biennial programme plan and priorities for the period 2008-2009 (A/61/6/Rev.1), and section 10, Least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, of the programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009 (A/62/6 (Sect. 10)). They also relate to: (a) programme 1, General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference management; (b) programme 8, Least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States; (c) programme 14, Economic and social development in Africa; (d) programme 15, Economic and social development in Asia and the Pacific; and (e) programme 23, Public information, of the proposed biennial programme plan and priorities for the period 2010-2011 (see A/63/6 (Part one), (Prog. 1), (Prog. 8), (Prog. 14), (Prog. 15) and (Prog. 23)).

III. Activities by which the requests would be implemented

3. With regard to operative paragraphs 4 and 5 of draft resolution A/C.2/63/L.57, it is recalled that under the established headquarters principle, the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries and meetings of its preparatory committee would be held at New York. It is, therefore, understood, in accordance with section 1, paragraph 5, of General Assembly resolution 40/243, that any additional costs resulting from a change of venue of these meetings from New York would be borne by the host country.

4. Although the note by the Secretary-General outlining the modalities of the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (A/63/284) has been submitted to the General Assembly, a decision on the organizational aspects, including the dates and venue of the Conference and the duration and dates of the preparatory committee, will be taken by the Assembly later during its current session in accordance with operative paragraph 8 of the draft resolution. There would also be a need for public information services and promotional events to ensure the success of the Conference.

5. Under the provisions of operative paragraph 6 of the draft resolution, two regional-level preparatory meetings will be held, one in collaboration with the Economic Commission for Africa and the other in collaboration with the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, in the context of the regular annual sessions of each Commission, to be supported by broad-based and inclusive country-level preparations.

6. Pursuant to operative paragraph 9 of the draft resolution, the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States would serve as the focal point for the preparations of the Conference, in accordance with the mandates given in General Assembly resolution 56/227, to ensure that those preparations are carried out effectively, and to mobilize and coordinate the active involvement of United Nations system organizations.

IV. Modification of the programme of work for 2008-2009 and the proposed biennial programme plan and priorities for the period 2010-2011

7. In order to reflect the provisions of the draft resolution, the narrative of section 10, Least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, of the programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009 (A/62/6 (Sect. 10)) would need to be modified to include additional outputs under subprogramme 1, Least developed countries, as follows:

Paragraph 10.18

Under "(b) Other substantive activities (regular budget)" add:

"(vi) Preparation of a road map for the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries;

"(vii) Preparation and substantive servicing of two inter-agency meetings;

"(viii) Substantive support for the preparation of 49 national reports;

"(ix) Planning for the regional preparatory meetings."

8. The relevant outputs pertaining to substantive and coordination activities beyond the current biennium would be reflected in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2010-2011.

V. Estimates of additional requirements

9. In order to effectively fulfil its role as the focal point for the preparation of the Conference as called for in operative paragraph 10 of draft resolution A/C.2/63/L.57, the Office of the High Representative would need to be strengthened by provision of temporary assistance equivalent to a total of 27 work months of Professional staff (2 P-4 and 1 P-3 for 9 months each) and 9 work months at the General Service level (Other level) in 2009 ($476,400 gross). There would also be additional requirements in 2009 for travel of staff members to initiate the process of consultation among all stakeholders ($24,000).

10. The requirement for the above temporary positions would continue for 17 months each in 2010-2011 ($899,900 gross). During that biennium, there would also be additional requirements relating to travel of staff to service two inter-agency meetings in Geneva and the two regional preparatory meetings ($84,400).

11. While the decision to convene the Conference and the intergovernmental preparatory committee would give rise to additional resource requirements with regard to conference servicing, support services and public information services, it is not feasible for the Secretariat to determine the full extent of those requirements until such time as specific information on the dates and venue of the Conference and the duration and dates of the preparatory committee is available.

12. Given that the regional preparatory meetings would be held in the context of the regular annual sessions of the Economic Commission for Africa and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, servicing of those meetings would be provided from within the existing capacity of the two regional commissions.

13. With regard to the provisions of operative paragraph 7 of the draft resolution, the attention of the Committee is drawn to the provisions of section VI of General Assembly resolution 45/248 B, in which the Assembly reaffirmed that the Fifth Committee was the appropriate Main Committee of the Assembly entrusted with responsibilities for administrative and budgetary matters and also reaffirmed the role of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions.

VI. Potential for absorption

14. No provisions have been made under the programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009 for the substantive preparatory and coordinating activities for the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries in 2009. At the current stage, it is not possible to identify activities within section 10 of the programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009 that could be terminated, deferred, curtailed or modified during the biennium.

15. Requirements for the activities by which the provisions of draft resolution A/C.2/63/L.57 would be implemented in 2010-2011 would be considered within the framework of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2010-2011.

VII. Contingency fund

16. It will be recalled that, under the procedures established by the General Assembly in its resolutions 41/213 and 42/211, a contingency fund is established for each biennium to accommodate additional expenditure derived from legislative mandates not provided for in the programme budget. Under this procedure, if additional expenditures are proposed that exceed the resources available from the contingency fund, the activities concerned would be implemented only through the redeployment of resources from low-priority areas or the modification of existing activities. Otherwise, such additional activities would have to be deferred to a later biennium.

VIII. Summary

17. **Should the General Assembly adopt draft resolution A/C.2/63/L.57, additional resource requirements of $500,400 gross ($437,100 net) would arise under the programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009. The amount would represent a charge against the contingency fund and, as such, would require an additional appropriation for the biennium 2008-2009.**

18. **The additional requirements for the biennium 2010-2011 would be considered in the context of the proposed programme budget for that biennium.**